

Medicare By the Numbers: A Look at Health Care Security for Americans 45 Years after Launching

Since launching the Medicare program on July 1, 1966, Democrats have fought to improve health care security for America's seniors by ensuring reliable and affordable health care coverage. For forty-five years, Medicare's guaranteed set of benefits and affordable premiums have improved health care coverage and quality of life for seniors substantially. Here's a look at the numbers:

IN 1964:	TODAY:
Only 51 percent of seniors had health care coverage	Virtually all seniors have health care coverage
Nearly 30 percent of seniors lived below the poverty line	7.5 percent of seniors live below the poverty line

Today, 39 million seniors and 8 million people under age 65 with disabilities are covered by Medicare and the majority of Americans consider Medicare extremely or very important to their retirement security. Democrats are committed to preserving this bedrock program that was created after the private market failed to adequately insure senior citizens and have strengthened the program through the Affordable Care Act.

While Democrats want to protect and strengthen the program, Republicans have voted twice to end Medicare and raise costs for seniors while giving tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans.

The numbers make it clear the Republican plan to end Medicare is the wrong choice for America's seniors:

More than \$6,000: the average increase in each seniors' health care costs each year

68%: the percentage seniors would pay for their health care costs by 2030, while a voucher would only cover 32% of costs.

Four million: number of seniors who would fall into the prescription drug donut hole that would reopen, costing seniors \$44 billion by 2020, including \$2.2 billion in 2012 alone

One million: number of seniors and people with disabilities to who would have to pay over \$110 million more for wellness visits in 2012

\$182,000: Additional money 54-year-olds would have to save to cover health care costs